**Maintaining a Checking Account**

Opening your own checking account can be exciting. You probably decided to open a checking account because you wanted a place to keep your money safe and you wanted to have access to your money when you need it. Having your own checking account can be scary since you are responsible for managing your account. At Canyon Bank, we want to take away the fears and help you manage your account effectively.

**Opening a Checking Account**

To open an account, you will speak to a new accounts representative who will ask you to fill out a few forms, sign a signature card (which is an official record of your signature), and deposit at least $100. The new accounts representative will answer any questions about your account and will give you temporary checks.

**Using Your Checking Account**

When writing checks, fill out the parts of the check using neat handwriting. Write clearly the date, amount, the payee (who the check is written to), and what the check is for. You will write the amount of your check in two places--once in figures (such as $19.25) and once in words (nineteen dollars and 25/100).

Be sure to sign your name exactly as you did on your signature card. For example, if you signed your name as Jennifer A. Davidson on the signature card, you should sign it exactly that way on your checks.

You can deposit money into your account any time by coming into the bank or using the drive-through bank. Simply fill out a deposit slip with your name, account number, and the amount you are depositing, and give it to a teller who will record the deposit and give you a receipt.

You can also deposit a check through the mail. All you need to do is enclose a deposit slip and your endorsed check in a deposit envelope available at the bank and mail to:

Canyon Bank

Accounting Department

32 Holly Lane

Box 875409

Brookfield, CT 06804-5409

**Managing Your Account**

When you write a check, record the check number and the amount on your checkbook register. A *checkbook register* is a booklet of forms that comes with your checks. This is where you record the date, check number, person or business paid, and the amount. In the amount column, you will keep a current record of your checking account balance by writing in the amount when you write a check and subtracting the amount of the check from your account balance.

Knowing the amount of money in your account can help you make spending decisions and can keep you from becoming *overdrawn* (writing a check for an amount that exceeds the amount in your account). Some people balance their checkbooks daily. Others may balance them weekly. The secret, however, is to be consistent. Make sure you know how much money is in your account before writing a check. Doing so can help take away the “scary” part of having a checking account.

When you write a check for an amount that is more than your account balance, you will become overdrawn. When this occurs, Canyon Bank will charge you $20 and will return the check to the business or person to whom you wrote the check, who will, in turn, send you a notice that the check has been returned because of insufficient funds. The notice will ask you to *promptly* pay the amount of the check with cash or money order plus their service charge, which may be as much as $25. As you can see, not managing your own account properly can cost you.

Having a checking account is a good way to establish credit and to monitor your spending habits. It also gives you the opportunity to take control of your finances. At Canyon Bank, we don’t want you to be scared about maintaining your account or about managing your money. If you would like to learn more about maintaining your account or about other services available, contact the Customer Service Department at 909-555-BANK.